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SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU: TALKING POINTS FOR UNSC
CONSULTATIONS

11. USUN is instructed to draw from the following talking points for the October 6 UN Security Council Consultations on Guinea-Bissau.

Begin points:

-- We would like to thank (DPA official) for his briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

-- The United States is pleased by statements from President Vieira and Prime Minister Correia that legislative elections will remain scheduled for November 16. The United States thanks the AU, the EU, ECOWAS, UNOGBIS, and others for providing election observers to ensure the elections will be free and fair. We call on all parties to participate according to the rules and to respect the election results. Any disagreements over the elections or their results should be handled only by judicial and constitutional means.

-- The United States remains concerned by the distrust and high tensions between the political parties in Guinea-Bissau. We note with concern the withdrawal from the Political and Government Stability Pact (PGSP) by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC). We call on all parties to come together to find common ground and work together for the good of Guinea-Bissau.

-- We remain deeply concerned about the events surrounding the July 12 arrival of a Venezuelan plane at Bissau airport without landing or over-flight permits, or prior knowledge of airport officials. We are particularly concerned with the actions of some military officials in these events. First, after the plane landed at Bissau airport, the military of Guinea-Bissau cordoned off the plane and took the cargo, which has yet to be returned or even identified. Second, the military's description of the cargo does not match statements given by the Venezuelan crew. Finally, the military prevented investigators from removing the plane's black-box. We were very disappointed at the release of the Venezuelan crew by a Bissauan criminal court judge despite the issuance of an international arrest warrant against one of the Venezuelans and protests by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

-- Events such as these highlight the dangers narco-trafficking poses to state institutions. The international community must continue counter narcotics programs to prevent fragile West African states from becoming narco-states.

-- We welcome the arrangements to establish the National Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat Office for Guinea-Bissau, which will be hosted by UNOGBIS. Furthermore, we encourage the UN implementing partners to expedite the implementation of the Peacebuilding Fund's four short-term projects in electoral support, youth employment and the rehabilitation of prisons and military barracks.

-- On the economic situation in Guinea-Bissau, we see a mixed picture. We are very concerned that Guinea-Bissau was ranked 175th out of 177 countries in the 2007 Human Development Index Report. We are also worried that over the last six months, the price of rice has risen by 75% in Guinea-Bissau. On the positive side, we welcome the IMF disbursement of \$2.9 million under the Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance program. The IMF made the decision following its positive report that four of the six quantitative indicators set by the IMF were met with the other two indicators expected to be met by the end of the year. We are hopeful that Guinea-Bissau soon will be eligible for the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, which would qualify the country for debt relief.

end points
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